



Visitor Management – Options Consultation / East Loch Lomond Byelaw Report

Paper for approval

1. Purpose

- 1.1 To lay out the proposed engagement and consultation programme for visitor management options and to present a report for approval (**Appendix 1**) on the experiences of operating the East Loch Lomond Byelaw since June 2011. If approved by the Board, the report will be submitted to Scottish Ministers.

2. Introduction

- 2.1 At its December 2013 Meeting, the Board agreed to undertake a process to develop visitor management options for all of our most pressured visitor locations across the National Park. That report set out the rationale for this approach and suggested an outline timescale for carrying out consultations. This report sets out a detailed consultation and engagement plan describes the nature of activity and scale of engagement envisaged and the timescales for reaching a preferred proposal.
- 2.2 The East Loch Lomond Camping Byelaw was brought into effect on 1st June 2011. In confirming the Byelaw, Scottish Ministers requested a report reviewing the situation following three years of operation. The effects of the Byelaw have been monitored closely during the period of operation and the report which summarises this evidence is attached as Appendix One.

3. Consulting on Visitor Management Options

Early Engagement and Information Sharing - Spring 2014

- 3.1 Officers are currently developing visitor management options broadly based on the areas identified as Visitor Management Zones (VMZs) in the National Park Partnership Plan approved by Ministers. Before going out to consultation on these options, it is important that the NPA supplements the considerable factual information, gathered over a number of years by the NPA Ranger Service, with the local knowledge of communities, landowners and user groups to inform proposals. Over the coming weeks a significant number of exploratory meetings will be held with these stakeholders focussing on the priority VMZ's.

National Park Authority Board Meeting

Agenda Item 8

Visitor Management – Options Consultation / East Loch Lomond Byelaw Report

These informal meetings will be used to;

- share information held by the NPA on visitor use and impacts
- listen to views about how to manage these pressures; and
- raise awareness about the NPA's future plans for consultation

Board Members will be kept briefed on the diary of meetings taking place with local communities if they wish to attend in support of officers.

- 3.2 During this period, officers will be continuing regular partnership engagement meetings to discuss emerging thinking with national and local public body partners and Non Government Organisations (NGOs) who may have an interest in any proposals or a role in supporting their implementation.

National Partners who are important contributors include:

- SNH
- Police Scotland
- Transport Scotland
- Sportscotland
- Forestry Commission/Enterprise
- Local Authorities (x4)

Preliminary information sharing meetings have already taken place and these organisations will have a key input to developing practical management solutions.

- 3.3 There are a range of NGOs with a particular interest in the Park such as the Friends of LL&TT and the LLA as well as national NGOs who will also have to be engaged ahead of the publication of options.

- 3.4 Officers aim to have this phase complete by the end of May 2014.

Developing and Consulting on Options – Summer/Autumn 2014

- 3.5 The National Park Partnership Plan identifies 14 VMZs which are under high or medium visitor pressure. The development of management options must respond practically to local characteristics and issues.

National Park Authority Board Meeting

Agenda Item 8

Visitor Management – Options Consultation / East Loch Lomond Byelaw Report

- 3.6 While these areas demonstrate similar symptoms of visitor pressure and misuse, the solutions to prevent these impacts will have to respond to local conditions and interests. The options that will provide a practical solution will be significantly affected by;
- the presence (or otherwise) of publicly managed sites to deliver infrastructure provision;
 - the environmental and physical capacity of particular areas to accommodate sustainable levels of camping, car parking and visitor use;
 - the availability of roadside sites to provide for suitable and safely accessible parking to support camping;
 - the relationship to other recreation activities (e.g. fishing, canoeing, walking, cycling, etc.); and
 - the willingness of private landowners to work collaboratively with the NPA to manage visitor use alongside their own commercial or land interests.
- 3.7 Following the initial engagement phase an options document will be prepared for consultation. A period of informal consultation on these options will be then be held. The purpose of this informal consultation will be to share the evidence that supports proposals, explore the merits of different approaches, and elicit constructive, well informed responses to the options being presented.
- 3.8 Following informal consultation on the options, officers will analyse the responses received and any new evidence presented in order to prepare a formal final proposal for consultation. Should the formal proposal contain regulatory elements such as a byelaw then this will have to be included in its full legal form and the proposal will have to be formally consulted on for a 12 week period prior to being submitted to Scottish Ministers for approval.

Finalising a Formal Proposal – Winter 2014/2015

- 3.9 This period would involve the NPA formally consulting on a proposal for a 12 week period. Once undertaken the NPA would need to decide whether, having considered the consultation responses, it was minded to alter the proposal, prior to submitting it to Scottish Ministers for approval.

Submission to Ministers for Approval

- 3.10 Once the proposal has formally been submitted, if the Scottish Government is minded to progress matters, it must then carry out its own 4 week consultation.

National Park Authority Board Meeting

Agenda Item 8

Visitor Management – Options Consultation / East Loch Lomond Byelaw Report

The overall period it takes to formally respond to the NPA is at the discretion of the Scottish Ministers. In the light of this, the earliest that any new measures could be in practically implemented would be the 2016 season.

East Loch Lomond Camping Byelaw

- 3.11 The report attached at Appendix 1 represents a factual account of the first three seasons of operating the East Loch Lomond Camping Byelaw. The report was requested by Scottish Ministers when the Byelaw was first approved. The Byelaw forms part of a comprehensive package of visitor management measures set out in the East Loch Lomond Visitor Management Plan. The experience to date has seen significant reductions in anti-social behaviour reported to the police, litter and damage to the environment. Visitor survey feedback points to a very positive visitor experience of the area. There have been no complaints about the existence of the Byelaw since its introduction and there has been little difficulty in ensuring visitors comply with the byelaw by camping in the designated sites. The NPA is now very keen to explore extending camping provision at locations such as Rowardennan.
- 3.12 Less resource is now needed to go into managing and patrolling the area. Patrolling from Police Scotland has been scaled back and NPA patrols are now much less resource intensive meaning resources can now be focussed on other problem areas in the National Park. The reduction in reported incidents to the police and individuals being processed through the justice is also a direct saving in public resources.
- 3.13 Taken together, all of these objective measures have contributed towards delivering a radically improved visitor experience in the area. Anecdotally, local businesses are reporting excellent trading and this is being evidenced by planning applications received by the NPA for tourism investment in the area. Local community representatives are extremely positive about the effects on the area. A short visitor survey has provided positive visitor perception results.
- 3.14 The report will be submitted to Scottish Ministers once approved. Members will be kept updated on any comment or response received thereafter.

National Park Authority Board Meeting

Agenda Item 8

Visitor Management – Options Consultation / East Loch Lomond Byelaw Report

4. Conclusion

- 4.1 The engagement and formal consultation processes required to progress comprehensive proposals for all of the National Park's VMZs are set out in this report.
- 4.2 Members are asked to note the nature and scale of engagement activity involved in each stage of the process. Key to the development and success of any proposals will be local collaboration with communities and landowners as well as the endorsement and support of key national agencies.
- 4.3 Members are asked to approve the East Loch Lomond Byelaw Report for submission to Scottish Ministers.

5. Recommendation

That Members;

1. Approve the East Loch Lomond Byelaw Report for submission to Scottish Ministers and agree to delegate final editorial amendments to the Director of Operations; and
2. Note and Endorse the proposed process and timetable for consulting on Visitor Management Options

Author: Bridget Jones, Head of Visitor Management
Executive Sponsor: Gordon Watson, Director of Operations